

(Oct. 1990)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Propertyhistoric name Country Woman's Clubother names/site number N/A**2. Location**street & number 2216 Old Russellville PikeNA ☐ not for publicationcity or town ClarksvilleNA ☐ vicinitystate TNcode TNcounty Montgomerycode 125zip code 37043**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.☐ See continuation sheet☐ determined eligible for the
National Register.☐ See continuation sheet☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.☐ removed from the National
Register.☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/clubhouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/clubhouse

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Log Cabin

Craftsman influence

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: CONCRETE

walls WOOD

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.) NA

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** moved from its original location.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Other: Women's History

Architecture

Period of Significance

1927-1956

Significant Dates

1927—construction of the club building

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☒ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: Center for Historic Preservation,
Middle Tennessee State University

Country Woman's Club
Name of Property

Montgomery County, TN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre Clarksville 301 SE

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 472937 4046786
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____
☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Leslie N. Sharp, Research Professor
organization Center for Historic Preservation date 20 December 2005
street & number MTSU Box 80 telephone 615-898-2947
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Country Woman's Club c/o Beth McSpaden
street & number 2115 Single Tree Drive telephone 931-553-8218
city or town Clarksville state TN zip code 37040

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Montgomery County, TN

Section 7: Narrative Description

Today located within the city limits of Clarksville (pop. 103,455), but historically in the community of St. Bethlehem in Montgomery County, the Country Woman's Club is a Craftsman-style, hipped-roof, log building. It was built by the husbands of the club members in 1927 using recycled logs and wood from a barn and stone from a cabin on another farm. While historically a rural community, residential growth from Clarksville is now reaching this area. The club building is the only resource on this .36 acres of land.

The clubhouse is a rectangular log building with a board and batten rectangular portion that runs along the rear or west façade. On the northwest corner of the rear portion is an integrated screened porch. It is constructed of varying width hand-hewn logs with varying thicknesses of solid chinking to accommodate for the varying widths of logs. The hipped roof is covered with modern asphalt shingles and has exposed rafter tails. The building has a stone pier with concrete-block infill foundation. The concrete was added sometime during the mid-twentieth century.

The main entrance is on the building's east façade. A hipped roof entry porch with exposed rafter tails extends from this front façade. Hand-hewn posts on stacked-stone piers support the porch roof. A 2005 concrete barrier-free ramp extends from the front door sloping straight out from the building and extending several feet from the front edge of the porch roof and into the historic concrete sidewalk that leads to the road. The ramp was poured directly over the stone steps, which are still visible on the sides of the ramp. According to the minutes of the club, the front walk and stairs were improved in 1950. Simple metal handrails are on each side of the ramp. A picture of the building prior to the addition of the ramp shows these same handrails that were repositioned for use with the concrete ramp. The three-bay front or east façade is symmetrical with a central front door and paired casement windows on either side of the front door. Each side of the casement window has eight lights. The wood mullions, muntins, and window surrounds are darkly painted. The original front door is a vertical wood plank door with ten-light sidelights and original screen door.

On the north façade of the main log portion is an opening for paired casement windows. One set of the casement windows remains. The other set on the western half has been removed for a window air conditioner. Above the air conditioner, the opening has been boarded up. The water meter is to the east of the window openings and the electric meter is to the west. A metal louvered vent is visible in the foundation.

The rear façade of the log portion is almost completely obscured by the board and batten portion of the building. On the north side of the rear portion is the entrance to the screened porch via three poured concrete steps and a screened door. To the east of the door and almost butting up against the log portion is a six-over-six, double-hung window. Only the upper portion of the porch is screened. The roof on the rear portion is hipped on the north side and shed in the center and on the south side. The west side or rear facade is pierced only by four, centrally located, six-light

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windows. The rear board and batten portion has a different roofline than the main building and may be an early addition.

The south façade of the rear portion has paired six-over-six, double-hung windows. A second windows air conditioning unit has been added in the west window of the pair. The south façade of the log portion is the mirror image of the opposite side with a third air conditioning unit and boards obscuring the west side of the window opening of what would have been paired eight-light casement windows. There is also a metal louvered vent in the foundation.

By entering the front door on the east façade, you step into the rectangular meeting room that occupies all of the log portion of the building. This space is dominated by a massive stone fireplace, hearth, and mantel against the west wall. (The stone chimney above the roofline was removed when the roof was replaced several years ago due to water leakage around the chimney.) The original wood floors, log walls with chinking, and exposed rafters are all extant. The window and door surrounds are wood. The original light fixtures remain, although they are non-operational and have been moved just off center to make room for the modern ceiling fans with light kits.

To either side of the fireplace is an opening that leads to the rear portion of the building. The kitchen, bathroom, and screened porch occupy this portion, which can be separated from the meeting room by the original swinging wood paneled doors. These doors and the exterior paneled doors leading to the bathroom and the screened porch still have their original hardware. The bathroom, constructed in 1936 from a portion of the porch and remodeled in the 1980s, is located in the northwest portion of the rear section. It is a half bath with a sink and toilet. The kitchen contains 1950s linoleum floor, faux wood paneling, and wallboard on the ceiling. There is a non-historic ceiling fan in the center of the room with a naked light bulb on either side. Circa 1950 wood cabinets line the east wall in between the doors to the meeting room. Earlier cabinets line the opposite wall as does a water heater, stove, and refrigerator. The screen porch with its wood floor, exposed lathe, framing, and rafter system is entered from the north wall of the kitchen.

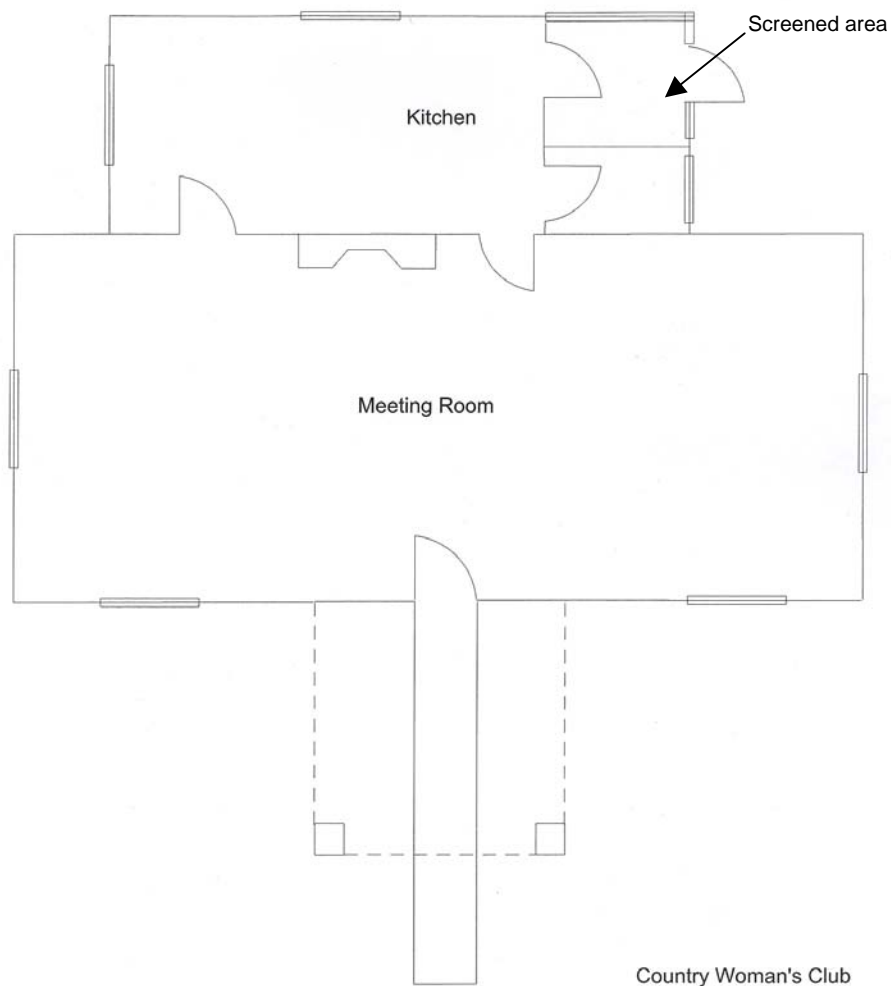
The Country Woman's Club building is the only building currently on this polygonal lot. Originally, the women used an outhouse, which was removed in 1936 when the half bath was added. The women and their spouses have done all work on the building.

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Sketch plan Not to scale



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Section 8: Statement of Significance

The Country Woman's Club in the unincorporated community of St. Bethlehem in Montgomery County is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under National Register Criteria A and C for its significance in women's history, social history, and architecture. It is being nominated at the local level of significance. In terms of women's history and social history, the Country Woman's Club is important in the woman's club movement, as a visible reflection of the consciousness of gender-specific activities and community roles. It also represents the relative educational, intellectual, political, and civic interests of rural Montgomery County women during the twentieth century. Architecturally the building is a fine example of a twentieth-century log building with Craftsman influence. The Country Woman's Club retains a high degree of architectural and historical integrity.

Following the Civil War in urban areas, women began organizing groups such as literary societies, alumnae associations, and charities to take a more proactive stance on political and social issues. In smaller towns, women formed improvement societies to push for local humanitarian, beautification as well as civic improvement projects. The impetus behind most of these activities was the belief that the Woman had a special role to play "cleaning" up her neighborhood, town, or locality. Female historian Mary Beard dubbed this phenomenon "municipal housekeeping," and the term has stuck. Among the many specialized organizations emerged the "general woman's club." It enabled one organization to serve many purposes, and acknowledged not only that special role of Woman, but also the "New Woman" of the late 19th century who had acknowledged civic responsibilities without yet full citizenship. More modern than her predecessors, pious but not withdrawn, domesticated but not tied to the home place, she was prepared to serve a multitude of humanitarian, civic and educational purposes. If it was a "man's world" then the New Woman had a special place in it, and the woman's club became that place. The height of the formation of woman's clubs was between the years 1890 and 1950.¹ In rural areas, the club formation coincided with the rural reform activities of the early twentieth century that sought to improve rural life and keep farm families—especially women—informed, in-touch, and most of all on the farm. These efforts included rural education reform activities, a focus on improving the home, rural electrification, and the founding of clubs for farm women like those in the community of St. Bethlehem.²

¹ Darlene Roth, Lynn Speno, and Leslie Sharp, "Woman's Club Buildings in Georgia," *Multiple Property Nomination* (2004), Atlanta, Georgia; Mary R. Beard, *Woman's Work in Municipalities* (New York: D. Appleton Co., 1915); Blair, Karen J. *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914*. Preface by Annette K. Baxter (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980); Darlene Roth, *Matronage: Patterns in Women's Organizations, Atlanta, Georgia, 1890-1940* (New York: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1994).

² Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *Rebuilding the Rural Southern Community: Reformers, Schools, and Homes in Tennessee, 1900-1930* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1998).

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The woman's club buildings can be classified as "community landmark" buildings. Community landmark buildings include the institutional, religious, social, governmental, and educational buildings in a community. These buildings are usually freestanding and reflect the architectural trends of the period. As centerpieces for public gatherings, buildings such as the Country Woman's Club building provide a sense of place and cohesiveness for the female citizens and symbolize the permanence, stability, and strength of a community from the early twentieth-century woman's perspective.

Built in 1927, the Country Woman's Club building is an excellent and intact vernacular Craftsman-style clubhouse designed to house club meetings and activities. It is also significant in architecture for its log construction using local materials. The husbands of the women club members built the club out of recycled logs from a barn on one of the member's farms and stone from a cabin on another local farm. Its original foundation was stone piers; however, sometime during the mid-twentieth century, concrete infill was added. Its large fireplace and porch piers are also made of local stone. Its other intact features include the wood windows and doors, the wood floors, and original light fixtures.

Like the Country Woman's Club, woman's clubhouses are a specialized building type designed and constructed to serve a social function. And like this one, the layout usually consists of a large centrally located meeting room, smaller kitchen, and a bathroom. Most of the clubhouses were developed to serve as assembly halls for the members of the club. The style and size of a building is indicative of the membership of the club and the level of wealth within a community at the time the building was constructed. Most of the clubhouses embody the prevalent architectural style in use at the time the building was constructed. In the case of the Country Woman's Club where the club did not have a large cash flow, the building was built from donated materials and donated labor. However, the women did not forego architectural style, their rustic building fit perfectly in with the Craftsman style that was highly popular throughout the country from the 1910s to the 1930s.

Background

Note: The following history is based on Claire Minie's history published in the Country Woman's Club cookbook (2000) and the club's unpublished "History of the Country Woman's Club—Eighty Years and Counting (25 September 2002). Both of these histories were based on the club minutes and club records.

Beginning in 1922, the women in the rural community of St. Bethlehem began meeting monthly for lunch at one of the woman's houses to "provide social enjoyment" with the other country women who did not "have the same privileges as city residents in the social world." From their initial and informal gatherings, the number of women grew to about thirty-five, such a size that it became necessary to have a larger meeting space. Their first outside-the-home meeting space was the White's Creek Chapel School. It was no longer in use and the women were granted permission to

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use it. The old schoolhouse needed work, so the women renovated it to meet their needs. Like the current building, the first clubhouse had a meeting room and a kitchen. They used donated furniture.

Thus began the Country Woman's Club in Montgomery County that is still going strong today. The women elected Mrs. Hicks Polk as their first president and she would serve as their head officer for twenty-two years until her death in 1944. The women wrote a constitution and bylaws, worked for the betterment of education and civic improvement, picked black and gold as their club colors, and chose "Battle Hymn of the Republic" as their club song. Their motto was and is "if we rest—we rust." In 1923, the club affiliated with the national organization known as the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC).³ This was the year after the GFWC acquired their own building in Washington DC, solidifying the importance of the national organization. The women had to be asked to join the local organization and then had to pay modest membership dues. They also sold five-cent slices of pie and ten-cent sandwiches to raise funds. The woman's club first purchase was a piano. By the mid-1920s there were fifty-five women who belonged to the club. A literary program followed each month's luncheon, which was held on the same day each month. The women still meet eleven times a year on the fourth Wednesday of each month, excluding December. As it did in the 1920s, today the women divide up into eleven teams to serve as hostesses at each of their meetings.

After three years at the White's Creek Chapel School, the Montgomery County School Board decided that they needed the building again and the women could no longer meet there. The women then used various places around the area until 10 February 1927 when the Country Woman's Club bought one-eighth of an acre lot for fifty dollars from Molly and W. B. (Willie) Warfield, deed recorded on 12 February 1927. The trustees for the club, as listed on the deed, were Lena Livingston Randle, Evie Brawner Collier, Julia Lockert Dunn, Vera Brown Harper, and Irene Rollow Polk. The women held lunches, dinners, ice cream socials, and even a "Fun Revue" (variety show) directed by a Mrs. Leigh Buckley on October 1927 to raise money for their new clubhouse. The women and their husbands then began work on the building. Mrs. Minor Randall donated recycled logs from her nearby barn. Mrs. Molly and W. B. (Willie) Warfield donated the stones from a cabin on her property for the fireplace, chimney, and foundation. The women held their first meeting there on 27 November 1927.⁴

³ Founded in 1890, the General Federation of Woman's Clubs (GFWC) claims to be the largest and oldest organization of volunteer women in the world. According to their literature there were approximately 8,500 clubs in the United States with over 350,000 members. Today, they have 270,000 members in 7,000 clubs in the United States and millions more members worldwide. The GFWC views itself as a professional organization for volunteer women. The GFWC and its state affiliates provide a network of support and prestige to active local Woman's Club chapters; Darlene Roth, Lynn Speno, and Leslie Sharp, "Woman's Club Buildings in Georgia," *Multiple Property Nomination* (2004), Atlanta, Georgia.

⁴ Montgomery County Deed of Sale; Minutes of the Country Woman's Club.

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The membership dues were one-dollar per year. Members could use the building for their personal functions for one-dollar and non-members for three dollars. The members participated in community projects such as supporting the consolidated school movement and the paving of rural roads. During the Depression, the women sponsored two girls from local families that needed help. The women used their money to provide transportation costs, meals, some clothing, and even some vitamins so these young women could attend Clarksville High School.

In 1936, the Club added a bathroom by using a portion of the rear-screened porch. The bathroom had a toilet and a sink. During World War II the women sold \$2,770 worth of War Bonds, aided the Red Cross by rolling bandages and helped the Clarksville Hospital by donating linens. The women also adopted families in Europe to whom they sent much-needed, monthly care packages.

In 1946 the club purchased an additional twenty-five feet on each side of the building. This brought its property up to .36 of an acre. In 1950 the dues became two-dollars per year and by 1970 they were raised to six dollars. Today, dues are \$35 per year for active members. The women still participate in community service; although their most-recent fundraisers focus on keeping the club building up.

Since its founding, the Country Woman's Club has maintained an average of approximately fifty-five members. The membership is limited to sixty-six women or eleven teams of six. Each year the club prints a yearbook with member names and addresses, the organization's constitution and by-laws, and the monthly serving teams. They have had twenty-seven presidents and compiled three cookbooks. The women compiled the first cookbook to help fund their new building. They did the second one in honor of their fiftieth anniversary of their original meeting. Published in the year 2000, the third cookbook was just to "share some good home cookin' with friends."⁵ The Rural Country Woman's Club continues to use its building as a gathering place for their members, just as it has since 1927. As it did at its founding, the club still meets to "bring together the women of the country for the purpose of better acquaintance and to promote higher intellectual, social, and moral conditions."⁶

⁵ Claire Minie, "Country Woman's Club," (printed in the Country Woman's Club cookbook, 2000).

⁶ Country Woman's Club, "Yearbook 2005," page 32.

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Section 9: Bibliography

Beard, Mary R. *Woman's Work in Municipalities*. New York: D. Appleton Co., 1915.

Blair, Karen J. *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914*. Preface by Annette K. Baxter. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980.

Country Woman's Club minutes and records (files include minutes, receipts, deeds, yearly programs, etc.). In the possession of the Country Woman's Club, Montgomery County, Tennessee.

Country Woman's Club. "Yearbook 2005." Unpublished, 2005. In the possession of the Country Woman's Club, Montgomery County, Tennessee.

"History of the Country Woman's Club—Eighty Years and Counting." Unpublished, 25 September 2002. In the possession of the Country Woman's Club, Montgomery County, Tennessee.

Hoffschwelle, Mary S. *Rebuilding the Rural Southern Community: Reformers, Schools, and Homes in Tennessee, 1900-1930*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1998.

Minie, Claire. "Country Woman's Club." Printed in the Country Woman's Club cookbook, 2000.

Roth, Darlene, Lynn Speno, and Leslie Sharp. "Woman's Club Buildings in Georgia," *Multiple Property Nomination*, 2004. On file at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Roth, Darlene. *Matronage: Patterns in Women's Organizations, Atlanta, Georgia, 1890-1940*. New York: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1994.

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Section 10: Geographical Information

Verbal Boundary Description

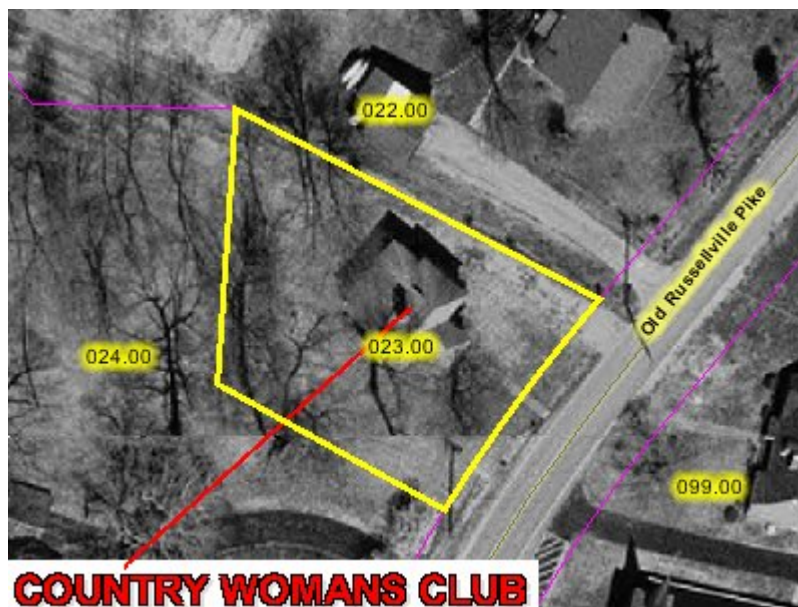
The Country Woman's Club boundaries are indicated on the attached Montgomery County Tax Map as found online at

http://gisweb.apsu.edu/website/general_viewer_v0_html/MapFrame.htm on 12/20/2015.

The clubhouse is located on the west side of Old Russellville Pike, just north of Rossvie Road. It is parcel 23 on Montgomery County tax map 041K.

Boundary Justification

The nomination includes the historic and current legal property associated with the Country Woman's Club at this location since 1946 when the women bought additional property to bring their ownership up to .36 acres.



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Photograph Log

Country Woman's Club
Montgomery County, Tennessee
Photographer: Leslie N. Sharp, MTSU Center for Historic Preservation
Date Photographed: October 2005
Negative: Tennessee Historical Commission

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1 of 18: | Front or east façade of Country Woman's Club; Photographer facing northwest. |
| 2 of 18: | East and north facades; Photographer facing west. |
| 3 of 18: | North or side façade of building; Photographer facing southwest. |
| 4 of 18: | North and west or rear facades; Photographer facing south. |
| 5 of 18: | Rear or north façade of building; Photographer facing southeast. |
| 6 of 18: | South façade of building; Photographer facing northeast. |
| 7 of 18: | South and east facades, showing grounds; Photographer facing north. |
| 8 of 18: | Exterior detail of front door; Photographer facing northwest. |
| 9 of 18: | Interior detail of front door; Photographer facing southeast. |
| 10 of 18: | Fireplace in meeting room; Photographer facing northwest. |
| 11 of 18: | Meeting room; Photographer facing east-northeast. |
| 12 of 18: | Meeting room; Photographer facing west-northwest. |
| 13 of 18: | Detail of fireplace and historic chandelier; Photographer facing northwest. |
| 14 of 18: | Kitchen; Photographer facing northeast. |

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- 15 of 18: Kitchen; Photographer facing southwest.
- 16 of 18: Bathroom; Photographer facing northeast.
- 17 of 18: Looking from kitchen into meeting room; Photographer facing east.
- 18 of 18: Looking from kitchen onto screened porch; Photographer facing northeast.